

From: Steffmo@aol.com@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/17/02 3:41am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

January 16, 2002

To Whom It May Concern:

As a professional who relies on computers for a large amount of my income, I wish to express my opinion that "slap on the wrist" remedies are inappropriate in the matter of Microsoft. My general observations of the company while following this matter are that this company has come to see itself as above the law, and, as we move into a new phase internet oriented computing, I find this very threatening. In fact, I find the notion that Microsoft may be allowed to expand its hegemony into the financial services area of the net, where all of our private information will reside, to be downright scary given its unethical actions during the court proceedings.

Microsoft has exhibited time and time again that it will cut at the knees any company who does not explicitly share its vision, or chooses not to accept Microsoft's designated position for it in its grand scheme of computing. The fact that Microsoft has exhibited this willingness to cherry pick the best ideas for inclusion into Windows means that there will be less incentive for innovators to test commercial waters with new concepts, as they know that once they have proven their concept Microsoft will simply declare it a "feature" of their next version of Windows.

This viewpoint has been exhibited in Microsoft's stance vis a vis Java, and is currently showcased by its exclusion of Real Audio and Quicktime software from the standard Windows XP package to the benefit of its own Media Player software.

Despite its pleas that innovation is being stifled, the record shows that Microsoft has never been an innovator. Microsoft has reiterated the idea of windows as espoused by

Xerox and Apple; the browser as put forth by Netscape; the media player as created by Quicktime and Realplayer; and more. Microsoft's attempt to dilute Java into yet another proprietary technology is well documented in court. Although I recognise Microsoft's talent at integrating, many of the ideas we accept as common in Windows were in fact developed elsewhere.

Perhaps in a normal business environment these actions are acceptable as competitive.

However, with the courts having decided at great cost to the American taxpayer that Microsoft is a monopoly, it is up to you to devise strict and meaningful remedies to ensure that Microsoft does not continue to abuse those companies brave enough to compete with it. To do anything less is to denigrate the public trust, and devalue our tax dollars.

Please resist misguided political and economic pressure and pressure and hand Microsoft a remedy that illustrates public resolve against this kind of business behavior.

Sincerely,

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By Email